

Capabilities-Based Planning Overview

On September 11, 2001, 2,996 lives were lost in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Resources were deployed from across the Nation to assist in the response and recovery operations. 9/11 reminded us that we all share responsibility for homeland security. All levels of government across the Nation need to prepare together, with private sector support as appropriate, for major events that exceed the capabilities of any single entity. The American structure of overlapping Federal, State, local, and tribal governance provides unique opportunities and challenges. Opportunities arise from the flexibility to explore differences and share best practices across the Nation. The challenge is to develop an interconnected and complementary “national” system that balance the need for flexibility with the need accountability.

In February 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) on *Domestic Incident Management*. HSPD-5 requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to lead a coordinated national effort with other Federal departments and agencies and State, local, and tribal governments to establish a National Response Plan (NRP) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). In December 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8) on *National Preparedness*. HSPD-8 requires DHS to lead a coordinated national effort, with other Federal departments and agencies and State, local, and tribal governments, to develop a national domestic all-hazards preparedness goal (or “Goal”) and realign requirements in a wide range of areas to support the Goal. HSPD-8 is a companion to HSPD-5. The NRP generally defines “what” needs to be done to manage a major incident and the NIMS generally defines “how” it needs to be done. The Goal generally defines “how well” it needs to be done and provides program solutions to help the Nation develop and maintain the capabilities to prevent, respond to, and recover from major incidents as described in the NRP and NIMS.

Capabilities-Based Planning is a form of all-hazards planning. It addresses the growing uncertainty in the threat environment by using a wide range of possible scenarios to bound requirements and thereby reduce the tendency to fixate on any one threat, hazard, or set of conditions. Target levels of capability will balance the potential threat and magnitude of terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies with the resources required to prevent, respond to, and recover from them. Officials across the Nation will be able to compare their current levels of capability to the targets and assess overall preparedness.

Capabilities-Based Planning provides answers to the following questions:

1. What should we prepare for as a Nation?

National Planning Scenarios. We must prepare for the next major event, not the last one. The National Planning Scenarios illustrate the range of major events the Nation could face. They illustrate the potential scope, magnitude, and complexity of major events that we should prepare for as a Nation. Scenarios such as these have been in use since 1995, when Presidential Decision Directive/PDD-39 “U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism” directed a national review of preparedness

for terrorism acts, including catastrophic weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici Program was established to provide training, exercises, and equipment to major metropolitan areas. The scenarios help project requirements and apportion responsibility among all potential partners so we will all be ready to roll in a coordinated national effort. The scenarios were developed by a Federal interagency group led by the Homeland Security Council and will be published as soon as they are finalized. Summaries are available on the ODP Secure Portal (<https://odp.esportals.com>).

2. What tasks need to be performed, under what conditions, and to what standards?

Universal Task List (UTL). The UTL provides a comprehensive menu of tasks that can be performed in the major events illustrated by the National Planning Scenarios in step 1. Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, with private sector support as appropriate, select the tasks that apply to them. The UTL will sort tasks by scenario, mission, function, and level of government that generally performs the task. In addition, the UTL will include a list of conditions derived from the National Planning Scenarios. The conditions should be used as a guide to define the variables of the operational environment that may affect task performance. The UTL will also include measures of performance and criteria associated with each task. The measures and criteria should be used as a guide to define performance standards, consistent with mission requirements. Standards, when linked to conditions, provide a basis for planning, conducting, and evaluating operations as well as training events. The UTL is being developed with Federal, State, and local subject matter experts, drawing on existing sources wherever possible. The current version is available on the ODP Secure Portal (<https://odp.esportals.com>).

3. Which tasks are critical?

Critical Tasks. A task is critical if failure to perform the task will result in an increase in the loss of lives or serious injuries, or will jeopardize the ability to accomplish mission-level outcomes associated with the task. Critical tasks are synonymous with “mission-essential tasks.” Critical tasks derived from the scenarios and included in the UTL, with associated conditions and performance standards, provide the foundation for developing measurable readiness targets.

4. What capabilities are needed to perform the critical tasks?

Target Capabilities List (TCL). The TCL identifies the capabilities to perform the critical tasks described in step 3. A capability provides a means to achieve a measurable outcome resulting from performance of one or more critical task(s), under specified conditions and performance standards. This step defines a measurable outcome that we want to achieve, as a Nation, for each capability and each scenario, based on the critical tasks, conditions and performance standards. The TCL includes a summary for each capability. The summary describes the level (amount and proficiency) of capability required from all sources (Federal, State, local, tribal, and private sector) to achieve an outcome. The summary describes the key attributes of a capability, with appropriate measures of effectiveness, supportability, time, distance, effect (including scale), and obstacles to be overcome. A capability may be delivered with any combination of properly planned, organized, equipped, trained, and exercised personnel that achieves the outcome. A recommended combination will be provided for illustration purposes, and to enable us to

estimate potential costs to close gaps in national preparedness. Capability summaries will be specific enough to enable entities to evaluate alternative combinations of elements (or solution sets) to satisfy the requirement, and general enough so as not to prejudice decisions in favor of the recommended combination (or solution set). The TCL is being developed with Federal, State, and local subject matter experts, drawing on existing sources wherever possible.

5. What level of capability is needed to perform the critical tasks for all scenarios?

Target Capabilities List (TCL). Conditions and performance standards can vary significantly across scenarios. This step involves a review of the capability summaries across scenarios to examine the capability required from all sources (Federal, State, local, tribal, and private sector) to achieve desired outcomes. It defines a consistent measurable outcome and level (amount and proficiency) of capability that we want to develop and maintain as a Nation for *all* scenarios based on the critical tasks, conditions and performance standards. In this way, we will define *risk-based target levels of capability* to support the Goal.

6. How do we share the responsibility to develop and maintain capabilities among Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, with private sector support as appropriate?

Capabilities may take years to develop and maintain. Building national capability requires us to take a broader regional approach, divide responsibility and count on every entity to do their part to develop and maintain capabilities that we may all need to draw upon in time of emergency.

Responsibility among levels of government. Responsibility to develop and maintain capabilities that are developed using Federal grant funding will be apportioned among the Federal, State, local, and tribal governments based on their statutory authorities, roles and responsibilities. Existing capabilities will be used to the fullest extent wherever possible. In apportioning requirements, consideration will be given to factors such as required response time, cost to acquire and maintain, projected frequency of use, degree of specialization, and need for lead time for research and development.

Tiers. Once statutory responsibilities and specialized capabilities have been addressed, the balance of the TCL will be tailored to different Tiers of jurisdictions. The TCL is not “one size fits all.” Both the risk and the resource base vary considerably among jurisdictions across the United States. Therefore, the TCL will be organized by Tier. Tiers are classes of jurisdictions. The primary purpose of Tiers is to account for reasonable differences in target levels of capability among groups of jurisdictions based on characteristics such as total population, population density, and critical infrastructure. The secondary purpose is to strengthen mutual aid among neighboring jurisdictions assigned to the same group. State and local officials will be able to group jurisdictions as they deem appropriate to fit into the standard Tiers. Interstate groups will be encouraged.

7. What capabilities does my entity need to develop and maintain to do our part?

The TCL will provide guidance on the specific capabilities and levels of capability that Federal departments and agencies and the States will be expected to develop and maintain. The TCL,

organized by Tier, will also provide guidance on the specific capabilities and levels of capability that a group of jurisdictions will be expected to develop and maintain. States will allocate Federal preparedness assistance to their jurisdictions to help them meet the target level of capability for their Tier. State, local, and tribal entities may use their own funds to build specific capabilities and levels of capability that fall outside the TCL and appropriate Tiers.

8. Does my entity have the capabilities we need to do our part?

Entities at all levels of government will compare their current capabilities to the target levels of capability identified in the TCL. The *capability assessment* will reveal “gaps” (implying that tasks or missions cannot be accomplished with current capabilities); “excesses” (unnecessary redundancy exists or a specific capability is no longer needed); and “deficiencies” (a capability exists, but is insufficient to meet the target level of capability). The assessment will indicate a level of risk based on the identified gaps and deficiencies.

9. How should we allocate our resources to have the greatest impact on preparedness?

In this step, entities at all levels of government will be able to *assess needs, define priorities, and allocate resources* to address specific gaps, excesses, and deficiencies. Entities will update *preparedness strategies* and *program plans* to reflect their decisions and manage programs to develop the elements of capability (or solution areas) that will have the greatest impact on preparedness.

10. How Prepared Are We?

Capabilities-Based Planning will provide a continuously validated baseline to improve the Nation’s overall level of preparedness. Capabilities will be demonstrated through *performance assessments*. Progress towards increasing our overall national level of preparedness will be documented and communicated through *preparedness scorecards*. A combination of self-, peer-, and outside assessment tools will enable decision makers to ensure the appropriate balance among resources allocated to strengthen specific capabilities that are prioritized based on the potential risk posed by terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.

National Preparedness Guidance will be issued in March 2005 to describe Capabilities-Based Planning in greater detail. Concrete examples will be provided.

In summary, Capabilities-Based Planning walks us through the questions we need to answer as a Nation in order to determine “how prepared do we need to be?” and “how prepared are we?”

Developing Target Levels of Capability

1. What should we prepare for as a Nation?	The <i>National Planning Scenarios</i> illustrate the scope magnitude, and complexity of major events that we should prepare for as a Nation.
2. What tasks need to be performed, under what conditions, and to what standards?	The <i>Universal Task List (UTL)</i> provides a comprehensive menu of tasks that can be performed in major events outlined in the scenarios. Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, with private sector support as appropriate, select the tasks that apply to them.
3. Which tasks are critical?	<i>Critical Tasks.</i> Critical tasks derived from the UTL, with associated conditions and performance standards, provide the foundation for developing measurable readiness targets.
4. What capabilities are needed to perform the critical tasks?	The <i>Target Capabilities List (TCL)</i> identifies the capabilities to perform the critical tasks. A capability provides a means to achieve a measurable outcome resulting from performance of one or more critical task(s), under specified conditions and performance standards.
5. What level of capability is needed to perform the critical tasks for all scenarios?	Conditions and performance standards can vary significantly across scenarios. This step defines the consistent measurable outcome and level (amount and proficiency) of capability we want to develop and maintain as a Nation for all scenarios. These are the <i>risk-based target levels of capability</i> for the Goal.
6. How do we share responsibility to develop and maintain capabilities among Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, with private sector support as appropriate?	Responsibility to develop and maintain capabilities will be apportioned among the Federal, State, local, and tribal governments. For those capabilities assigned to the local or tribal level, the Target Capabilities List will be tailored to different <i>Tiers</i> of jurisdictions. Tiers are classes of jurisdictions, defined based upon differences in risk and resource base. State and local officials will be able to designate or group jurisdictions as they deem appropriate to fit into the standard Tiers.

Comparing Current Capabilities to the Target Levels of Capability

7. What capabilities does my entity need to develop and maintain to do our part?	The TCL will provide guidance on the specific capabilities and levels of capability that Federal departments and agencies and the States will be expected to develop and maintain. The TCL, organized by Tier, will also provide guidance on the specific capabilities and levels of capability that a group of jurisdictions will be expected to develop and maintain.
8. Does my entity have the capabilities we need to do our part?	Entities at all levels of government will compare their current capabilities to the target levels of capability identified in the TCL. The capability assessment will reveal “gaps,” “excesses,” and “deficiencies.”
9. How should we allocate our resources to have the greatest impact on preparedness?	Entities at all levels of government will be able to <i>assess needs, define priorities, and allocate resources</i> to address specific gaps, excesses, and deficiencies. Entities will update <i>preparedness strategies</i> and <i>program plans</i> to reflect their decisions and manage programs to develop capabilities that will have the greatest impact on preparedness.
10. How prepared are we?	Capabilities will be demonstrated through <i>performance assessments</i> . Progress towards increasing our overall national level of preparedness will be documented and communicated through <i>preparedness scorecards</i> . A combination of self-, peer-, and outside assessment tools will enable decision makers to ensure the appropriate balance among resources allocated to strengthen specific capabilities that are prioritized based on risk.